

Fifth Sunday of Lent- March 26 2023

Acknowledgment of Land, Seas, Skies and Waterways

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past and present for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Context- Fifth Sunday of Lent

Throughout Lent, we have been on a Journey to the Foot of the Cross. We have been in the desert, up the mountain, to Jacob's Well, to the Pool of Siloam and today our last stop before we enter Jerusalem is Bethany to the tomb of Lazarus. Lazarus was a friend of Jesus as were his sisters Martha and Mary.



Figure 1 Jesus resting at Bethany at the house of his friends. Illustration. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 6 Dec 2017.

Scripture: John 11: 1-27 (a shorter version of the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday which is John 11:1-45)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

There was a man named Lazarus who lived in the village of Bethany with the two sisters, Mary and Martha, and he was ill. — It was the same Mary, the sister of the sick man Lazarus, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. The sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.'

On receiving the message, Jesus said,

'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.' The disciples said, 'Rabbi, it is not long since the Jews wanted to stone you; are you going back again?' Jesus replied: 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? A man can walk in the daytime without stumbling because he has the light of this world to see by; but if he walks at night he stumbles, because there is no light to guide him.'

He said that and then added, 'Our friend Lazarus is resting, I am going to wake him.' The disciples said to him,

'Lord, if he is able to rest he is sure to get better.' The phrase Jesus used referred to the death of Lazarus, but they thought that by 'rest' he meant 'sleep', so Jesus put it plainly, 'Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad I was not there because now you will believe. But let us go to him.' Then Thomas — known as the Twin — said to the other disciples, 'Let us go too, and die with him.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.'

Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.'

Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'



Figure 2 Death and Raising of Lazarus / Illumin.. Fine Art. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection by Kirby Will Project Officer Identity and Outreach

Martha is a woman who feels the weight of responsibility for her family so when Lazarus is ill, she springs into action and sends for Jesus. We know from our encounter with her in Luke's Gospel - when Jesus visits their home- that she is a woman who knows how and likes to get things done. When Jesus is a guest in her home, she is the one going about the tasks that need to be done and is unhappy with her sister Mary for not pitching in. Imagine then the helplessness she must feel at the situation with her brother Lazarus; he was ill and there was nothing she could do to make it better; she could not ensure his healing would 'get done.'

The actions of Martha teach us a valuable lesson. She recognises that she cannot fix everything but that she only need draw on her faith and appeal for help. Often, when faced with seemingly large challenges, we think that we can fix things on our own but as Martha shows, the best course of action is to draw on our faith, appeal for help and go from there.

Prayer Catholic Culture Online.

O blessed St. Martha,

Your faith led Jesus to proclaim, "I am the resurrection and the life"; and faith let you see beyond his humanity when you cried out, "Lord I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

With firm hope you said, I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him, and Jesus called your brother Lazarus back from the dead.

With pure love for Jesus, you welcomed him into your home.

Friend and servant of our Saviour, I too am "troubled about many things."

Pray for us that we may grow in faith, hope, and love, and that Jesus, who sat at your table, will hear us and grant us a place at the banquet of eternal life.

Amen.

Call to Action:

- read the full version of the story of Lazarus (Jn 11:1-45)
- choose a [craft activity](#) to delve deeper into the story of Lazarus.
- have a family discussion about situations when we might need to ask for Jesus' help

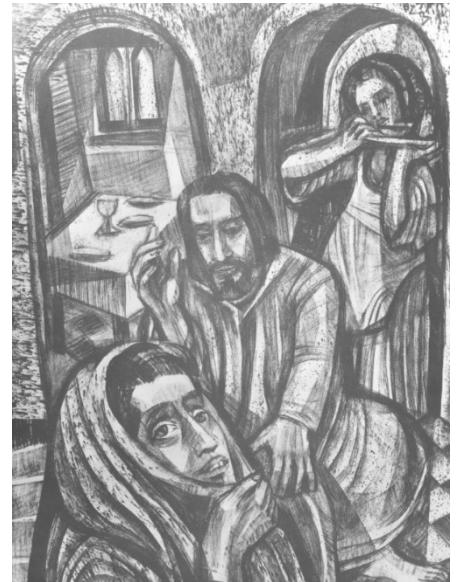


Figure 3 In the House of Martha and Mary by Honest Schempp, Born 1932 . Fine Art. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016.

